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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2017

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SUBJECT: NEW HOME DEMOLITION IN EAST JERUSALEM

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) The GOI Interior Ministry demolished Amcit Mahir Siaj's home in Bayt Hanina, East Jerusalem on December 5. PolOff visited the site while the demolition was in progress and was told by Siaj that Israeli police had forced him, his wife and four children from the house at 0730. He said they removed all the furniture and belongings from the residence and demolished two-thirds of the house. His lawyer obtained an emergency injunction against the demolition, he said, but not until most of the house was demolished. He added that police arrested his neighbor and a relative who resisted evacuation of the residence.

¶2. (SBU) According to Israeli Committee Against Home Demolition (ICAHD) coordinator (and former Meretz city councilman) Meir Margolit, there is no town plan in most of Bayt Hanina, including Siaj's neighborhood, and the Municipality will therefore not issue permits to build new homes there. He said the Municipality and residents have informally agreed on a compromise: residents will not build until a town plan is issued, and the Municipality will not demolish homes (including Siaj's) built prior to this informal agreement. Margolit noted that the demolition of Siaj's home was ordered by the Interior Ministry, which has parallel demolition authority and does not recognize the Municipality's informal arrangements.

WALLES